



H1N1 Provider Briefing

Date: December 8, 2009
To: All Healthcare Providers
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Information on H1N1 in Rhode Island

Local Influenza Activity Level: Widespread¹; H1N1 predominant circulating strain

Rhode Island²: 350 hospitalized cases, 9 deaths

Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness)³: Rhode Island: 3.02%, New England Region: 3.3%, Nation: 3.54%

Even though Rhode Island's flu activity continues to decrease, levels of influenza-like illness are high compared to what is expected for this time of year. H1N1 vaccination remains important to protect individuals against a strongly anticipated additional wave of illness in the coming months.

H1N1 school-based clinic vaccine uptake

85,567 school-aged children have received the H1N1 vaccine over the first 20 days of HEALTH's 28-school-day H1N1 school-based vaccination program. Of the currently enrolled students in schools with clinics held during this time period, 75% received the vaccine.

H1N1 vaccine provider enrollment and reordering

The H1N1 vaccine provider enrollment process reopened December 2 for providers who did not enroll in the program during the initial enrollment period. The enrollment process will close again on Friday, December 11 at 4 p.m.

Current program enrollees who would like to increase their original patient estimates are also able to make these changes in the system at this time. Keep in mind when adjusting your estimates that providers will be able to begin administering the H1N1 vaccine to school-aged children in grades kindergarten through 12 who missed their **first** doses of H1N1 vaccine after the completion of all regular school-based vaccination clinics. The last school-based clinic is currently scheduled for December 15. HEALTH is still planning for the second H1N1 vaccine dose for school-aged children through 9 years of age to occur in January and February in additional school-based clinics.

Providers who did not complete the Vaccine Ordering/Priority Group Breakdown step in the H1N1 enrollment process **must do so now**. This step is required to finalize the enrollment process. To enroll in the H1N1 vaccine provider program, edit original enrollment information, or complete a priority group breakdown, see <http://pandemic.health.ri.gov/h1n1/>. For vaccine order assistance, please contact Sue Duggan-Ball at 222-1580, sue.dugganball@health.ri.gov or Heidi Wallace at 222-4631, heidi.wallace@health.ri.gov.

Reporting doses of H1N1 vaccine administered

Reporting H1N1 doses administered is a requirement for participation in the vaccine program. All vaccine providers are reminded to submit reports of H1N1 vaccine administered electronically on a weekly basis to HEALTH. HEALTH monitors these reports closely and makes decisions about vaccine allocation, redistribution

¹ Rhode Island reported widespread activity for the week of November 22 to November 28, 2009. Percentages of influenza-like illness remain above baseline in all 5 regions of the state. For details see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/surveillance/>.

² Confirmed and probable H1N1 hospitalizations and deaths since September 1, 2009

³ Influenza-like illness activity reported by 27 sentinel surveillance sites from November 22 to November 28, 2009

between practices, and changes in priority groups based on the uptake of vaccine in each of your practices. **Failure to report administered doses in a timely fashion may result in a delay in further shipments of H1N1 vaccine.** For reporting instructions and to report doses administered, please see the H1N1 vaccine provider website at <http://pandemic.health.ri.gov/h1n1/>.

Pediatric H1N1 intranasal vaccine delivery and usage

Pediatric vaccine providers should expect additional shipments of H1N1 intranasal vaccine through the remainder of the month. This vaccine should be used to administer second doses of H1N1 vaccine to preschool children 2 through 5 years of age without medical contraindications for the intranasal presentation. Following the completion of all school-based H1N1 vaccination clinics, providers may also administer the intranasal vaccine to school-aged children in grades kindergarten through 12 who missed their **first** doses in their scheduled school clinics. The last school clinic is currently scheduled for December 15. Providers should still continue to prioritize injectable vaccines for those children who cannot receive the H1N1 intranasal vaccine.

Management of influenza vaccination in patients with suspected egg allergy

HEALTH has posted an article on managing influenza vaccination in patients with suspected egg allergy on its website. This article has been reviewed and is slated for publication in the February 2010 edition of *Medicine & Health Rhode Island*. For most patients with egg allergy, if the benefits are felt to outweigh the risks, cautionary measures are available that can enhance safe vaccine administration. Patients with suspected egg allergy who require influenza vaccine may be referred for evaluation by an allergist/immunologist. To read the article, see <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/ManagementOfInfluenzaVaccinationInPatientsWithSuspectedEggAllergy.pdf>.

H1N1 vaccination clinics for pregnant and post-partum women

Patients of Westerly Hospital who are pregnant or up to six months post partum may receive the H1N1 vaccine this Tuesday, December 8 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at Women's Health of Westerly. This practice is located at 45 Wells Street in Westerly. Patients should bring their insurance cards with them to this vaccination clinic.

An H1N1 vaccination clinic for pregnant and post-partum women is also scheduled for Wednesday, December 9 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at the VNA of Care New England's office at 51 Health Lane in Warwick. This office is on the Kent Hospital campus. This clinic will be open to all pregnant women and to post-partum women up to six months post-partum.

Influenza vaccination coverage rates among pregnant women in Rhode Island

Prenatal care providers play a critical role in increasing rates of influenza vaccination among pregnant women. According to 2004-2007 data from the Rhode Island Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS), pregnant women who were either recommended or offered influenza vaccine by their providers were 15.5 times more likely to be vaccinated than women who were not recommended or offered the vaccine. To read more about the importance of the prenatal care provider role in influenza vaccination coverage rates among pregnant women, see

<http://www.health.ri.gov/data/coveragerates/InfluenzaVaccinationCoverageAmongPregnantWomenInRhodeIsland.pdf>.

H1N1 vaccination clinic for Rhode Island residents in out-of-state colleges and universities

HEALTH is planning to hold an H1N1 vaccination clinic for Rhode Island residents through 24 years of age who attend out-of-state colleges and universities. The clinic will be held sometime between December 21, 2009 and January 8, 2010. The exact clinic date, location, and hours of operation will be announced when available. In order to plan for such a clinic and estimate the number of eligible students, **we are asking interested students to pre-register for the clinic online before 4 p.m. on December 11, 2009.** Only students who have pre-registered will be able to attend the clinic. The online registration form is available at <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/schoolh1n1clinics/outofstatecollegeclinics/index.php>.

National flu public service announcements campaign

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) joined with the Ad Council to launch a new nationwide public service announcements (PSA) campaign, *Together We Can Fight the Flu*, that encourages Americans to get vaccinated against H1N1. The PSAs are being distributed to national media outlets and are also available to view online at <http://www.flu.gov/psa/#fightvideo>. HHS also recently launched a new video, "Americans Speak Out: Why We Got the Flu Vaccine," that features Americans talking about why they chose to get vaccinated against H1N1 to protect themselves and their communities. To view the video, see <http://www.flu.gov/news/blogs/flu vaccine.html>.

Influenza vaccine safety

HEALTH has developed a set of materials on H1N1 vaccine safety for providers to help them answer patients' questions and engage them in informed discussions about the safety and effectiveness of the H1N1 vaccine. These materials are posted on HEALTH's website at <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/for/providers/>.

Resources

- HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>;
- Archived provider briefings and regular news updates: <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/flu/>
- H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022
- H1N1 email address h1n1@health.ri.gov
- <http://www.flu.gov>